(c) The road had been declared as NH is the year 1972. When the existing road was taken over from Public Works Department, adequate granular sub-base was not existing. After declaring as National Highway, only occasional overlays were laid in the from of improvement to riding quality/strengthening.

(d) Government proposes to carry out major rehabilitation by sanctioning during 2009-10 concrete pavement in the entire stretch at a cost of Rs.118.58 crore.

FTA negotiations with EU

*95. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE:
SHRI N. K. SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the European Commission has called for an open discussion between India and the European Union on several issues for the successful conclusion of the ongoing India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations;

(b) if so, the details of discussions held between India and EU in the recent past and outcome thereof;

(c) whether the trade negotiations between India and EU are designed to eliminate barriers and not to create new ones; and

(d) if so, the further reaction of Government on Indo-EU deals?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) to (d) The Government of India is negotiating a bilateral Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement with the European Union (EU).

An India-EU High Level Trade Group (HLTG) between India and EU was established at the 6th India-EU Summit held in New Delhi in September, 2005 to explore ways and means to widen and broaden the economic relationship and explore the possibility of a Trade and Investment Agreement. The HLTG submitted its report to the 7th India-EU Summit held in Helsinki in October, 2006. The Summit decided that the two sides should enter into negotiations for a Broad based Trade and Investment Agreement covering areas of Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Investment, Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures, Technical Barriers to Trade, Trade Remedies, Customs Cooperation and Trade Facilitation, Dispute Settlement, Competition and Intellectual Property Rights. Negotiations commenced in June 2007 covering all these areas. So far, seven rounds of negotiations have been held. The Seventh Round of Negotiations was held in July, 2009 and the next round of Negotiations is scheduled to be held in January, 2010. Legal texts of the proposed agreement in all these areas have been exchanged and are being discussed. Tariff liberalisation offers have also been exchanged on trade in goods. Negotiations are ongoing to eliminating barriers to trade and not to create new ones. Both sides are committed for an early, balanced and successful conclusion of the negotiations.